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IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

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MEETING TO FOCUS ON WATER QUALITY SOLUTIONS IN CARROLL COUNTY AREA

CARROLL – Carroll County residents and livestock producers are invited to a public meeting that will focus on improving the area’s water quality on April 5.

Anyone interested in water quality, including those from surrounding counties, is invited to attend the meeting that will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. Tuesday at the Bishop Greteman Center, 421 East Bluff Street, in Carroll.

“The idea for this meeting grew out of an investigation into several fish kills in Elk Run Creek that occurred last fall,” said Dan Stipe, the supervisor of the Atlantic DNR field office. “As we walked the creek day after day, we found a number of concerns that I know people would address if they were aware of how their actions affected water quality.”

But this meeting is not just for people who live near Elk Run Creek, he said. “We’d like to invite everyone who is concerned about water quality and who would like to participate in the solutions,” Stipe added.

“In this meeting we will talk about how the citizens of Iowa can make a difference,” said Stipe. “When we all work together to improve stream and ground water quality, we can help ensure water quality and safe drinking water into the future.”

Discussion topics will include the Elk Run Creek fish kill investigation, septic tank issues, conservation methods that work, financial assistance, and feedlot controls and management.

Speakers will include agency representatives who can provide technical and financial assistance to rural residents for improvements that will enhance water quality.

Representatives from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, ISU Extension, the Carroll County Health Department, the DNR and the Iowa Cattlemen's Association will be speaking. The Des Moines Water Works will have staff attending who can answer questions about water quality monitoring in streams that feed into the North Raccoon River.

A copy of the meeting agenda is available on the DNR Web site at www.iowadnr.com.

For more information, contact Dan Stipe or Alison Manz at 712-243-1934.

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DNR SCHEDULES SITE VISITS BASED ON COMPLIANCE OF LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS

DES MOINES – The DNR will begin scheduling site visits based on how well confinement producers have filed their manure management plans and operated their facility during the last five years.

The idea of rating producers based on performance came from industry representatives who participated in a kaizen or continuous process improvement event with the DNR and other stakeholders.

“The purpose of this rating or tier system is to spend our time on the facilities that need our help the most,” said Cindy Martens, an environmental specialist in charge of DNR’s manure management plans. “It will also give producers an incentive to file their MMPs and operate their facility correctly.

“We worked with the producer groups to develop a three tier system that will allow us to schedule site visits annually, every two years or every five years,” she added.

“The tier system rewards producers for their environmental stewardship and having a positive effect on the environment,” said Alan Witt, Midwest environmental coordinator for Prestage-Stoecker Farms. “It was created to be a self-monitoring system with all producers and all farmers knowing the exact criteria to determine which tier they fit into.”

Beginning March 24, the DNR will review approximately 4,500 files to see if producers have filed MMPs and operated their facility in compliance with state law during the last five years. By April 7, the review should be completed. The DNR will rank producers as follows:

- **Tier 1 facilities** have had one or less clerical violation and no technical violations or administrative orders in the last five years. DNR will do an on-site review once every five years.

- **Tier 2 facilities** have had one technical or multiple clerical violations. The DNR will schedule an on-site review at the facility every two years.
- **Tier 3 facilities** have received an administrative order from the DNR in the last five years or have had multiple technical violations. The DNR will conduct an on-site review of these facilities annually.

“The initial rating is based on a review of producer files covering the last five years, looking for both technical and clerical violations,” said Dan Olson, an environmental specialist at the Atlantic DNR field office.

Olson said that a technical violation would include over application of manure, having inadequate freeboard in manure storage structures, or applying manure too close to buildings or protected waters and designated areas.

A clerical violation would include filing an MMP late, or having minor errors or omissions in an MMP or application records.

Olson said that because some producers filed late MMPs during the first two years that annual plans were required, the DNR will only consider late submittals of MMPs starting in March of 2005 when they count clerical errors. “We are acknowledging that some producers had a learning curve since we adopted the annual submittal process in 2003,” he said.

“We think setting up the tier system will help us serve customers better and be more efficient,” said Martens. “The DNR has held a number of process improvement events –inviting stakeholders who can give us a fresh look at the processes that affect them.”

For more information, contact Cindy Martens, environmental specialist senior, at the Spencer DNR field office, 712-262-4177.

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DNR HELPS CHARLES CITY MOVE AHEAD WITH REDEVELOPMENT PLANS AT FORMER TRACTOR FACTORY “BROWNFIELD” SITE

Former Allied/White Farm Equipment Factory to become property of Charles City Area Development Corporation

CHARLES CITY — The Charles City Area Development Corporation (CCADC) will assume ownership of the former Allied/White Farm Equipment factory site in Charles City, as of April 1, 2005.

The 73-acre site in the heart of Charles City produced tractors for more than 90 years under the names of Hart-Parr, Oliver and White. However, the property has been idle for the last 10 years, with bankruptcy of the Allied Products Corporation and questions about potential contamination hindering the sale and redevelopment of this property.

While bankruptcy court proceedings yielded CCADC standing to receive ownership of the site, CCADC wanted to ensure they wouldn't be inheriting any significant environmental problems along with the deed to the site.

"The site has great potential for redevelopment, and we've wanted to get the site back into productive use," said Tim Fox, executive director of CCADC. "But we weren't sure what, if any, environmental contamination issues were out there, and we needed help to identify and deal with any such concerns."

To help CCADC answer these environmental questions, the DNR conducted an environmental investigation of the site through its Iowa Brownfield Redevelopment Program. Brownfields are defined as abandoned, idled or underused properties, where resale or redevelopment has been hindered by known or suspected environmental contamination. The investigation was funded by a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Results of the DNR investigation, conducted over the last six months, concluded that the majority of the 73-acre site had no significant environmental impacts.

"We found some areas of soil contamination on the far east end of the factory site, mostly from the disposal of foundry sand with elevated metal concentrations," said Mel Pins, coordinator of the DNR's brownfield program. "However, this should not impede the redevelopment of the site."

Pins also said that commercial or industrial development on the site could properly address the noted soil contamination with capping or covering of those areas. Low levels of groundwater contamination were found at the site, but no significant off-site groundwater contamination was identified.

"Having the ability to work hand-in-hand with the DNR really helped us to understand these issues and moved the process ahead effectively," said Charles City Mayor Jim Erb. "I hope other Iowa communities with brownfield sites can see the potential these types of properties have, if they just get some key questions answered and good information for their decision making."

The program seeks to help communities determine how the contamination issues at brownfield sites can best be resolved, with the ultimate goal of site redevelopment, job creation and improving the environment and quality of the local community.

"The Allied/White Farm site is a good case study of how our brownfield program works," said Pins. "We are focusing our efforts on smaller cities and rural communities with the program."

The Charles City Area Development Corporation will now proceed with negotiations between potential industrial and commercial businesses that have expressed interest in the property.

Allied Products, the former owner of the property, closed the tractor factory in 1993 and declared bankruptcy in 2000. Through the bankruptcy proceeding, courts granted the Charles City Area Development Corporation the authorization to assume title to the property.

For more information, contact Mel Pins at (515) 577-2341.

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RURAL ODOR STUDY CONTINUES WITH SPRING MANURE APPLICATION

DES MOINES—State inspectors are continuing to test odor levels and responding to odor complaints as part of a comprehensive study to determine air quality near large animal feeding operations.

“With spring manure spreading underway, we are reminding Iowans of this effort,” said DNR spokesman Brian Button. “Citizens can call 1-800-961-ODOR when unusually strong odors are present through the year.” Radio ads will also promote the study.

He said an inspector is sent to take readings as soon as possible. “This isn’t an enforcement effort. No action is taken against the source,” he said. The study is used to collect data to help determine if any future odor-reducing measures are necessary.

The effort stems from state legislation in 2002 that called for comprehensive reviews of air quality near animal feeding operations. Hydrogen sulfide and ammonia gas monitoring also began in 2002.

State inspectors use hand-held devices that dilute odorous air with seven to 15 parts filtered air, then record the results.

To report excessive agricultural related odors, call 1-800-961-ODOR.

For more information contact the DNR’s Brian Button at 515-281-7832.